

LARGE JAIL NETWORK BULLETIN

Volume 2, No. 5 - September 1991

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Foreword

Network support of the **Large Jail Network Bulletin** remains very high, as evidenced by the continuing positive response to our request for articles and the positive feedback we receive from members.

The Institute's budget for FY 1992 has been finalized. It is essentially at the same level as last year. The Jail Center has budgeted funds for two Network meetings. The first is scheduled for January 12-14, 1992, in Denver, Colorado. The second will be scheduled for late spring or summer. Funds will also be included in the Information Center budget to publish three (3) **Bulletins** each year.

Distribution of the **Bulletin** is still a bit problematic. In order to be responsive, we provide each agency with one bound copy and one single-sided camera ready copy to facilitate reproduction and distribution within each agency.

Barbara Krauth of the NIC Information Center oversees the publication of the **Bulletin**. If you have any topics that you would either like to see covered in the **Bulletin**, or if you would like to write an article on some aspect of your agency's operation, please contact Barbara at (303) 939-8877.

Michael O'Toole
Chief, NIC Jails Division

Orange County Corrections Addresses Needs of Women Offenders

**by Georgette Thornton,
Orange County Corrections,
Orlando, Florida.**

As more women are arrested and incarcerated in our correctional facilities each year, the gap in programming that meets their specific needs becomes more apparent. The rise in arrests and convictions of women is staggering, and few agencies are able to accommodate these women appropriately through their existing facilities and resources.

Consequently, the female offender must often take a back seat in the system and be content with the "left-overs" handed down from men's facilities. Fortunately, however, correctional agencies are finally seeing the need to provide parity to women offenders. Along with a new correctional mentality, the legal issue of equality for incarcerated women is forcing many changes.

In Orange County, Florida, much is being done to standardize the supervision and program opportunities for offenders of both sexes. The mission of the Orange County Corrections Division in Orlando, Florida, is to take responsibility for the condition in which inmates are released back into the community.

This is especially critical in relation to women offenders and is accomplished through the Inmate Management System (IMS). (For an article on the IMS, see "A Structural Approach to Inmate Management," *Large Jail Network Bulletin*, Vol. 1, no. 1, April 1989). The IMS responds to and encourages inmates' positive behavioral growth by providing habilitative program opportunities. Its basis is that by displaying positive, acceptable behavior and adhering to system rules, inmates may advance to levels of housing that provide greater amenities and program opportunities.

Implementation and regulation of the IMS are overseen by the Offender Services Department. The department has also established a "continuum of care" component that identifies an inmate's psychological and sociological needs as well as the means to address them while he or she is under our custody and control.

The continuum begins at booking, when a needs assessment is performed. From then on, the inmate is guided toward the facilities, programs, and services that address his or her needs. This process continues throughout all phases of corrections, including traditional housing, community based corrections, and community control. Inmates who show appropriate behavior can work their way into a

less restrictive facility and eventually a community correctional facility or community supervision.

Orange County's women's facility supports the IMS and continuum of care by taking a proactive approach to developing educational and life skills programs that promote, foster, and enhance appropriate behavior. The needs of women offenders are many and varied. In terms of their average characteristics, women offenders are likely to be:

- Young-between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-four.
- Unmarried.
- Responsible for dependent children.
- Unemployed at the time of their arrest.
- Undereducated and lacking in job skills.
- Very low in self-esteem.

These sociological factors present a unique challenge to the development of programs for female offenders. To effectively respond to the particular needs of female offenders, Orange County found it necessary to focus on specific areas and design specific programs to get to the root of an individual's behavior, in order to help women change their destructive behaviors.

Program Objectives

Three main objectives are the basis for the design of rehabilitative programs for female offenders in Orange County:

- Programs need to delve deeper into the psychological factors of female offenders and women in general to address the societal problems and circumstances that women regularly encounter.
- Educational programs must be enhanced to provide the basic literacy and academic skills that will prepare female offenders to assume an independent lifestyle and successfully enter a competitive job market.
- Emphasis must be placed on developing an equal number of educational and vocational programs for women as are offered to men, and they must address the specific needs of female offenders.

Based on these objectives, Orange County is exploring several areas of programming. The two most important areas being addressed are literacy/vocational education and life skills training. To address the basics, Orange County provides Adult Basic Education, G.E.D., and literacy instruction. Vocational classes in keyboard familiarization and basic computer use are also provided.

To further support our programmatic philosophy, we offer extensive classes in life skills competencies.

Life skills programming is being provided through a series of two-hour Saturday seminars. These seminars have so far addressed personal motivation, self-esteem building, career planning, and making choices.

Additionally, two comprehensive programs provide life skills learning in a group setting through specialized housing. The first is the NURTURE unit, managed by the Orange County Jail Ministry. The teachings of this program are religiously based, but they address the sociological problems faced by women in and out of jail.

The second is the Corrections Chemical Dependency Program, which is over-

seen by facilitators from the Center for Drug Free Living. The program is based on a

twelve-step approach and attempts to educate women about the reasons behind their drug addictions and to suggest alternate behaviors.

Together, these programs provide a basis for the more specialized programs that address specific circumstances that may have contributed to the incarceration of our female offenders.

HELP Program

One of the most unique programs that is offered to address the specific needs of female offenders is the

HELP (Health Education for Life Planning) Program. HELP is a re-entry program for pregnant women with a history of substance abuse. It is designed to help incarcerated women who are nearing their release to prepare for their adjustment back into the community. The program has been designed through a cooperative effort between the Orange County Corrections Division and Snowbabies, Inc., in Orlando.

Snowbabies, Inc., was founded in 1987 by Tammy Herman, a reformed substance abuser, and Dr. Gregor Alexander, chief of the neonatal intensive care unit at the Arnold Palmer Hospital for Women and Children. Its intent is to address

HELP is a re-entry program for pregnant women with a history of substance abuse and is designed to help women nearing release to prepare for adjustment back into the community.

the problems of drug-addicted mothers and their children. After the concept for Snowbabies was firmly grounded, Tammy contacted the corrections division to offer her services to the women who needed it most: those who are pregnant and in jail due to their addictive behaviors.

The HELP program is offered to selected inmates and includes both instruction in the institution and support on the outside. The instruction is designed as a five-week program based on two, two-hour

sessions per week. The instruction is presented in the following format:

- Sessions 1-5 address the psychological and sociological aspects of addiction, focusing on the sharing of experiences and the understanding of past behaviors.
- Sessions 6-7 educate the women on the physiological aspects of pregnancy and the effects of substance abuse on the developing fetus and in childbirth.
- Sessions 8-10 provide guidance and support for community re-entry through planning, personal improvement, and goal setting.

The program is conducted by Ms. Herman with the assistance of volunteer professionals from the community. To date, women have completed four sessions of the HELP program. Their immediate reactions have been very positive.

To complement the HELP program, and with the help of the chaplain from Orange County Jail Ministries, Tammy has set up shepherding homes that care for newborn infants

HELP House is a haven for released women, offering them an alternative to returning to the destructive environments that put them in jail in the first place.

whose mothers are incarcerated. The personality of the birth mother is matched to the shepherding mother so that a cooperative relationship be-

tween the two can be formed. The shepherding mother cares for the child during the mother's incarceration and helps accustom her to the care of her child upon her release.

A third part of this comprehensive program is HELP House, now under renovation on a quiet side street in downtown Orlando. HELP House provides an appropriate environment for reuniting a mother and child upon the mother's release from jail. Though the mother is technically outside the control of the correctional system, she is guided by strict rules developed and enforced by Snowbabies, Inc. She is required to seek employment, assist with household chores, tend to her own and her baby's personal needs, and continue to attend group and individual counseling sessions that address her addictive habits. HELP House is a haven for released women and offers them an alternative to returning to the destructive environments that put them in jail in the first place.

Breaking Barriers, a follow-up to the HELP Program, is designed to raise the self-esteem of women who have spent time in the correctional system.

It is provided by the Pacific Institute, based in Seattle, Washington. Breaking Barriers helps inmates look at their destructive behaviors and provides ways to overcome negative thoughts and substitute these with positive thinking and goal-setting.

Programs Change Behaviors

The focus of all Orange County's programming for women is to provide each the opportunity to change her life by changing her behaviors, whether by learning to read, getting a G.E.D., participating in substance abuse counseling, or raising self-esteem. Training provided to correctional officers covers behaviors specific to women offenders and the supervision techniques needed to control these behaviors. With this knowledge and the use of interpersonal communication skills, correctional officers find it easier to manage the women under their supervision. Use of direct supervision also helps provide an environment that encourages good behavior.

Over the last two hundred years, locking offenders up and allowing them to fend for themselves has done nothing to lower recidivism rates. Instead, the women offenders in our custody need role models to follow. They need guidance and education about the realities of life and ways they can achieve an independent lifestyle. Through programs such as HELP and Breaking Barriers, we in Orange County feel we are providing significant guidance on women's road to recovering and becoming respectable members of the community.

For additional Information, contact Georgette Thornton, Orange County Corrections, Orlando, Florida, (407) 648-3500. ■

Principles in the Use of Intermediate Sanctions

by Mark Kellar, Director,
Criminal Justice/Detention
Command, Harris County
Sheriff's Department,
Houston, Texas.

In 1989, the Texas legislature passed a bill, HB 2335, which mandated sweeping changes in the state's criminal justice system. In addition to reorganizing the state prison and parole agencies, the law encouraged a rethinking of the local justice system.

Prison crowding in Texas had reached crisis proportions. Because of a 1985 federal court consent

HB 2335 authorized the distribution of state funds to compensate counties that participated in various alternative sentencing and intermediate sanctioning programs. Approximately \$10.5 million was allocated to Harris County in 1990 for operation of a variety of programs, to be coordinated through the Adult Probation Department. As a result of HB 2335, Harris County's probation agency was restructured and renamed the County Department of Supervision and Corrections.

Historically, jails were operated in all Texas counties by the county sheriff, and probation programs were assigned to county probation departments. The implementation of HB 2335 served as a catalyst to develop a greater degree of cooperation

among the various criminal justice agencies. As a result of initial experience with this restructuring, several principles have evolved that should be considered as we progress toward a new era in criminal justice.

Principle 1-The criminal justice system must be coordinated through the joint commitment of all involved parties. In Harris County, we have

instituted a criminal justice advisory committee, which is chaired by the county budget officer who reports directly to the county judge and commissioners. The committee is composed of representatives from:

- The county sheriffs department.
- The Community Supervision & Corrections Department (adult probation).
- The pretrial services agency.
- The district attorney's office.
- Misdemeanor and felony courts.
- Data processing.
- The county clerk's office.

The committee is an active body that makes hard policy recommendations for each of the member agencies. Problems are explored openly, frankly, and with a shared impulse toward resolution.

Principle 2-The development of alternative sentencing and intermediate sanction programs can only be effective if adequate screening and inmate/client assessment are included so that offenders are placed in appropriate programs. Having programs available does not ensure success. Only by placing appropriate persons in proper programs can true success be attained.

Development of alternative sentencing and intermediate sanction programs can be effective only if adequate screening and inmate/client assessment are included so offenders are placed in appropriate programs.

decree, the state was capped at 95 percent of its prison capacity. Since that time some 20,000 additional prison beds had been opened and another 16,000 were due to be occupied before the end of 1992. Even with this dramatic increase in prison beds, some 12,000 prisoners were backlogged in the various county jails across the state.

Principle 3-A continuum of programs represents the best model for Harris County.

Under this system, each court has a range of options from which to choose. For example, the ultimate sanction in a felony conviction is a sentence to prison for a long period of time. As an option, the court may decide after a thorough review of the circumstances in the particular case that the appropriate sanction might be a shorter period of incarceration and a rigid alternative such as the Court Regimented Intensive Probation Program (CRIPP). On successfully completing this program, the offender may be moved into a less restrictive alternative, such as work release. Conversely, if the offender does not perform well in the CRIPP program, the court may opt to reinstate prison time. Thus, the offender him/herself, through his/her behavior, becomes an active partner in the decision process.

Principle 4 - Intermediate sanctions and alternative sentencing absolutely require coordination among the various agencies. No longer can we in the sheriff's department see our role as merely maintaining custody and control while the inmate is incarcerated in our facility. Under the theory of CRIPP, the Sheriff's Department has a responsibility to deliver a program during a set time frame. But the entire criminal justice system's responsibility transcends that limited time frame and requires coordination among all agencies in the system.

Principle 5-Each agency is better suited to perform some operational functions than others.

For example, we believe that

the sheriff's department is best suited to providing proper conditions of incarceration.

Again, CRIPP is a good example of this principle. On the other hand, Adult Probation is best suited to providing counselling and follow-up for residents in the program. Local community colleges are best suited to providing educational opportunities, and the court is best suited to making the judicial decisions that ultimately place the offender.

Principle 6-Alternative sentencing and intermediate sanction are not necessarily more cost-effective than warehousing prisoners.

While it is tempting to "sell" intermediate sanctions programs as being inexpensive, the fact is that they may or may not be. For example, high risk maximum security prisons are extremely expensive, at least in terms of initial capital outlay. The real costs of jails and prisons are expended by staffing through time. As compared to treatment oriented programs, prisons may be cheaper, at least in the short run, than intermediate sanctions programs that provide expensive educational programming, psychological resources, and drug abuse treatment. It should be noted that alternative methods eventually will result both in the generation of tax

revenues and in greater societal benefits. Therefore, it is our opinion that although short term costs may not be

No longer can we in the sheriff's department see our role as merely maintaining custody and control while the inmate is incarcerated in our facility.

reduced, long term societal costs surely will be.

Principle 7-Community corrections alternative sentencing and intermediate sanctions must be given an opportunity to work because the traditional system has eroded to total chaos.

In Texas, prisoners often serve only twenty-six days of incarceration for every year of sentence. This situation is a disgrace and cannot be tolerated. It is therefore critical that we in the correctional field consider all viable alternatives.

For further information, contact Mark Kellar, Director, Criminal Justice/Detention Command, Harris County Sheriff's Department, Houston, Texas; (713) 221-6044. ■

Jail Management Evaluation Index Indicates Conditions in New York City Jails

*by James Bennett,
Director of Information
Systems, New York City
Board of Correction*

The New York City Board of Correction has been working to develop a management evaluation index to enhance its ability to analyze conditions in the New York City jail system. The index targets three broad areas of jail management: security, staff, and service provision. We collected data from these areas and arrived at one broad indicator designed to measure the overall well-being of jails in the New York City system.

New York City has more than 22,000 inmates and more than 13,000 Department of Correction staff, including over 11,000 uniformed staff. The Board of Correction has a field staff of thirteen to check compliance with standards and to address inmate grievances. Twelve office staff respond to infraction appeals, analyze data, perform research, make policy recommendations, and perform administrative duties.

As with every other system in the country, the New York City system is growing rapidly every year and is simultaneously faced with tighter budget constraints. As the correc-

tional system continues to grow to unpredictable levels and becomes increasingly complex, it becomes more important for us to be able to simplify analysis without compromising its quality.

The management evaluation index provides a method for analyzing large amounts of data simultaneously, allowing the board to collect and analyze much more data than was previously possible. The index also has improved the quality of analyses performed by providing both a wider base of information and a basis for evaluating it.

The process of developing the index has required identifying the components of jail management, collecting data that attempt to measure those components, evaluating how the indicators relate to each other, and based on all these, making a judgment about the relative importance of each of the indicators. Rather than focusing on one issue at a time, we intended the index to provide a broad picture of the status of a jail.

The index has the potential to allow the board to analyze more fully and quickly the effects of various policy decisions. It can provide the basis for developing models based on probability to project the effects of

proposed policy initiatives before they are implemented.

Step One: Identifying Relevant Categories

The first step in developing the index was deciding what we were interested in knowing about the city's jails. We grouped the issues into three basic categories: security, staffing, and service provision. These categories reflect many of the basic issues with which the Board of Correction has been concerned over the past several years. Other jail systems might find it more useful to categorize their data differently.

Step Two: Identifying Indicators

The next step was to identify specific variables to use as indicators to represent the four categories. Data were collected for a thirty-six month period from October 1987 through September 1990 and were obtained only from jails that could provide consistent and distinct data for most of the period. This eliminated some of the more unique jails in the system, including two jail barges that have gone in and out of service, changed location, and been used for differing purposes (e.g., work release, drug programs) during the period. Also, some of the smaller jails did not have distinct records available in every category. These facilities are considered part of a larger command and, therefore, their

records are sometimes lumped together with the other jails in the command. All the data used were compiled from Department of Correction reports, logbooks, and other records.

Once the indicators were identified and the data collected, our task was to combine them in a mean-

Variables Used to Create the Jail Management Evaluation Index

Security

- Weapons contraband
- Drug contraband
- Violence

Staff

- Staff/inmate ratio
- Overtime
- Line-of-duty injury absences
- Non-line-of-duty injury absences

Service Provision

- Inmate grievances
 - ◆ DOC procedures
 - ◆ Personal items
 - ◆ Living environment
 - ◆ Services and programs
 - ◆ Communication
 - ◆ Inmate employment
- Guidance and counseling
 - ◆ Crisis intervention
 - ◆ Individual counseling
 - ◆ Outside referrals
 - ◆ Inside referrals
 - ◆ Other services
- Law library usage
- Recreation attendance
- Clinic visits
- Visits

ingful way. We made the assumption that all the categories are interrelated to some degree. Issues such as staff overtime and absences may affect violence, security, and service provision; violence affects absences and overtime; absences affect overtime; overtime affects absences; and so on.

With the exception of the staff/inmate ratio, we viewed the categories as both dependent and independent variables, meaning that they both exerted influence on and were influenced by the other variables. We viewed the staff/inmate ratio as causal only because, at a particular time, it could not be caused by any of the other variables.

Step Three: Weighting Indicators

Each indicator was weighted to determine how much it should influence the index. There is no established approach to assigning weights, however. It can be done based on intuitive or subjective knowledge of the jail system or simply by weighting all indicators equally. We chose to assign weights based on the degree to which each indicator is correlated with the other indicators.

Because of the general nature of the variables, precise estimates of cause and effect would have been extremely difficult to determine. Instead, we chose to use the relative correlation of the variables as the basis for their weights. That is, the more a change in the level of one variable was associated with a change in the level of other variables, the greater the weight attrib-

uted to that variable, regardless of whether there was a direct cause-effect link. What this approach produced is the degree to which each variable acts as an indicator of the state of the "rest of the system," as opposed to how much it affects or causes the state of the system.

Of the three major categories, staff indicators turned out to have the greatest combined weight at 45.7 percent, followed by indicators for security at 31.0 percent and service provision at 23.0 percent. Staff/inmate staff ratio was weighted the most heavily of the individual indicators at 16.3 percent. Other individual indicators assigned relatively high weights were violence level (14.0 percent), weapons contraband infractions (10.3 percent), absences related to non-line-of-duty injury (10.3 percent), and overtime (10.1 percent).

To calculate an index value, we had to determine a base value. We considered two methods for doing this. The first was to pick one time period to compare against the others. The problem was that it was not easy to determine a normal value for the index, making results difficult to analyze without comparing them to values from several other periods or from several other facilities, or both.

Another method we considered was using an average of the values from all periods as the basis for comparison. This would allow us to see from a single index value how well a

jail was doing compared to its own average. Therefore, we chose to use this average value as the index base.

Step Four: Calculating Average Index Values

We calculated the average in two ways, creating two different indexes. The first method was to calculate the average value for each indicator for each jail. In this way, the jail's current index value could be compared to its own average values, providing a way to measure trends in a particular jail over time or to identify relative improvement or decline. However, this method for calculating the base value may result in a higher rating for a jail that has not performed well but has improved somewhat than for a jail that has performed well but has not recently performed quite as well. As long as the statistic is interpreted as the relative performance of each jail to its own past performance rather than as a comparison of the performance of the two jails, this is not a problem.

Second, we calculated the average **value** for each indicator for all the jails to see how each jail ranked in relation to the others. This created a better statistic for comparison across jails, but it gave an unfair advantage to jails with easier-to-manage inmate classifications. We could have overcome this by including classification variables in the index but did not because we also wanted to compare the performance of jails with differing classifications. For example, we wanted to compare the performance of jail housing high

numbers of parole violators and those housing few.

The final result was two sets of index values for each facility and each month. The first set was derived by using as base values the average indicator values for each facility, and the second by using the average values calculated for all twelve facilities.

The first index yielded results that had a smaller range. This is understandable, as we would expect more consistency when comparing one jail's performance over time than when comparing one jail to another. When we used the all-jail averages as a basis for comparison, some jails almost always had values above 100, while others nearly always had values below 100. A look at each jail separately, however, showed that the variation from month to month was much less when using the all-jail index than when using each jail's own index.

For both indexes, jails tended to show values above or below 100 for several months in a row, meaning that trends could be identified. If the index scores had been radically different from month to month, it would have diminished the index's usefulness as a warning system.

Step Five: Testing the Validity of the Index Values

Finally, to test the validity of the index values, we looked at several categories of "special incidents" to compare the index values for when

and where these incidents occurred. Although we did not expect the index to be capable of predicting these incidents, we expected the index value for the facility to be below 100 when these incidents occurred. We found in testing, however, that the index derived from the all-jail average values did not perform well at all, while the index derived from the average scores of each jail performed slightly better. For the categories of suicide, homicide, and escape, we found no correlation between either index value and the occurrence of the incident. Because these incidents generally involve few inmates or even just one, they may have little relation to overall conditions in a jail.

More encouraging results were obtained in looking at the occurrence of inmate disturbances. Of eight incidents that can be categorized as serious inmate disturbances for the period of the study, six occurred in jails that had index values below 100 for that period. This result is far from being statistically significant, however, and provides only anecdotal support for the validity of the index. Clearly, we need to develop other tests before we can feel confident of the index values. The project nevertheless represents a step toward developing an index to analyze conditions in the jail system. We intend to pursue further efforts in this direction.

For further information contact Jim Bennett, New York City Board of Correction; (212) 964-6307. ■

A Wholly False Sense of Security: *Wilson v. Seiter* and Jail Litigation

by **Arthur Wallenstein**,
Director, King County
Department of Adult
Detention, Seattle,
Washington

"A prisoner alleging that the conditions of his confinement violate the Eighth Amendment's prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment must show deliberate indifference on the part of the responsible prison officials." (Wilson v. Seiter, No. 89-7376, 6/17/91) Excerpted from Criminal Law Reporter, Vol. 49, no. 12, June 19, 1991.

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision in Wilson v. Seiter has been the subject of considerable discussion among correctional administrators. Following is one jail administrator's response to the decision.

Justice Antonin Scalia, writing for the majority in remanding an appeals court decision regarding conditions of confinement, noted that the state of mind of these involved in the specific conditions was an appropriate area of inquiry. He suggested that the conditions themselves might not rise to an Eighth Amendment violation unless a standard of "deliberate indifference" or wantonness could be shown. The most unusual thought process in the majority opinion may suggest that a broad range of prison

and jail conditions might be sustained, even if wholly deficient, in the absence of malicious intent by the administrator or the system. Some have even suggested that future constitutional challenges to prison and jail conditions may be defended by reference to insufficient funding by state or local government. I do not concur with this interpretation, nor do I believe that ***Wilson v. Seiter*** retreats significantly from twenty years of court-developed doctrine of appropriate jail and prison conditions and administrative responsibility for same.

Twenty years of federal court examination of jail and prison conditions, policies, behaviors, and treatment issues have not been swept away. Let us assume that some major conditions of confinement cases may be made somewhat more difficult to prove under the "deliberate indifference" doctrine. However, this is not likely to inhibit successful challenges to hundreds of jail and prison policies and procedures that are well established in caselaw and practice as well as in the standards of the field and profession. It is well to remember that the vast majority of federal cases are settled out of court and are not the subject of formal opinions. They are settled out of court because government units recognize that a court will not sustain unconstitutional practices. The hundreds of cases that address

injuries to inmates through assaults, self-inflicted injuries or suicide, institutional failure to meet prevailing standards of health care practice, and the like will continue to fall within the area of substandard practice.

Prevailing professional standards accepted throughout our profession require safe facilities, humane conditions of incarceration, appropriate standards of medical and mental health care, protection of inmates from abuse, and appropriate staff conduct. Any administrator who believes that ***Wilson v. Seiter*** diminishes the constitutional responsibilities inherent in administration will find little protection in the "deliberate indifference" standard offered by the Court. A thoughtful and conservative jurist, Justice Byron White, reminded all administrators several years ago in *Wolff v. McDonnell* 418 U.S. 359 (1974) that "There is no iron curtain drawn between the Constitution and the prisons of this country." Case law extended these doctrines to jails, and conscientious improvements in jail practices and the responsibility of administrators for same have not been undone. Quality correctional practices will continue to reduce the likelihood of lawsuits.

For further discussion, contact Arthur Wallenstein, (206) 296-1268. The text of the opinion is available from the NIC Information Center. ■

About Face Program Turns Lives Around

**by Charles C. Foti,
Orleans Parish Criminal
Sheriff, New Orleans,
Louisiana**

The About Face program is an innovative, inmate life-changing experience operated by the Orleans Parish Criminal Sheriff's Office in New Orleans. While characterized as a "boot camp" program because of the regimented discipline involved, the About Face program is significantly different. Most boot camp programs operated by correction institutions throughout the country are short term—averaging ninety days or less—and employ shock incarceration techniques in an attempt to reform offenders. These programs often receive high marks for visibility, but they fall short of achieving their real goal, which is to reduce recidivism by rehabilitating criminals.

Key Elements

The About Face program has eight key elements:

- Commitment from participants
- Discipline
- One-on-one counseling
- Substance abuse programs
- Community service work
- Education

- Vocational training
- Life skills training

Selection Process

Participation in About Face is strictly voluntary and subject to stringent requirements. The About Face staff receives five or six letters a week from the general inmate population requesting an opportunity to test for acceptance in the program. However, not all of the 4,400 inmates in Orleans Parish Prison are eligible; fully 80 percent are unsentenced and therefore ineligible for this program.

Participants for the About Face program are chosen from sentenced offenders after a rigorous screening process. The selection process begins with a computer-generated list of those inmates who meet certain criteria. The criteria include age, criminal record, time remaining on the current sentence, and the nature of the offense.

Typically, an inmate chosen for the program is male, between the ages of seventeen and forty years, who may have up to a five-year sentence, but must have at least six months

remaining of his sentence. The sentence may be a state or municipal sentence but must be for a non-violent charge. The inmate must also be in good physical condition with no significant physical handicap.

Evaluation, Counseling

Once in the program, participants are required to complete a battery of tests to determine education levels and thirty-page interview on their personal history and experience.

Trainees are allowed to participate outside the jail complex in activities ranging from community service work to synchronized running in citywide road races to marching in Mardi Gras parades.

In general, 60 percent of the participants are found to test between the third and fifth grade level, and 40 percent test between the sixth and ninth grade level.

One-on-one counseling is an important part of the About Face program. Participants receive personal therapy as well as counseling for substance abuse that is patterned after the nationally known Alcoholics/Narcotics Anonymous program. Approximately 85 to 90 percent of the participants have a history of alcohol or drug abuse.

Program Uniqueness

To reinforce the idea that the About Face program is indeed special, inmates in this program are called "trainees" and live in separate barracks, dress in distinctive uniforms, and even have a different diet. A separate environment is essential in order to eliminate contact with the general inmate population and enforce the disciplined schedule necessary for this program.

Trainees become part of a platoon which initially consists of thirty to thirty-five trainees. Each platoon begins and ends About Face training as a unit. At present, there are three platoons, for a total of 100 trainees.

Another unique aspect of this program is that trainees are allowed, with supervision, to participate in activities outside of the jail complex. These activities range from community service work to synchronized running in citywide road races to marching in formation in Mardi Gras parades.

Uniforms consist of bright yellow sweatsuits or military style flight suits for drill, study and work details. On more public occasions, trainees wear khaki uniforms and boots.

Staffing

Each platoon is supervised by full-time drill instructors who lead military style drill and ceremony, conduct inspections, and oversee physical exercise and team athletics. The drill instructors are selected because of their prior military experi-

ence. Drill instructors must be at least twenty-one years old, physically fit, and high school graduates with the ability to instruct, discipline, counsel, provide leadership, display high morals, and act as role model. In addition, drill instructors must complete the same training academy as all other deputies and must become certified commissioned law enforcement officers. About Face drill instructors also wear a distinctive uniform consisting of military camouflage.

Daily Schedule

A typical day for About Face participants begins with roll call at 5:00 a.m. Each hour of the day is strictly scheduled with activities including physical fitness exercises, educational/vocational classes, and community service projects. Even meal time is regimented, with alternating groups scheduled for clean up. In the evening, 10:30 p.m. signals lights out.

Participation Statistics

When a trainee begins the About Face program, he is expected to stay a minimum of six months. It is a demanding program, and not everyone who starts the program completes it. Approximately one-third of those accepted into the About Face program are paroled or released early. Another third are dropped from the program. Of those dropped, almost 90 percent are dropped for disciplinary reasons, 6 percent are dropped for medical reasons, and another 4 percent are dropped at their own request. The

average stay in the program is nine months.

Education/Vo-Tech Training

Trainees are required to make progress toward earning a general equivalency diploma and to develop other skills that will benefit them upon release. Trainees who cannot read or write are enrolled in a computerized interactive adult literacy program, known as PALS (Principles of the Alphabet Literacy). Once these skills are mastered, the trainee moves on to pre-G.E.D. classes, and finally to G.E.D. classes. Certified teachers on staff are used for tutoring. The barracks classroom is equipped with ten IBM personal computers which utilize a variety of educational software packages.

The Sheriff's Office has established a partnership with Delgado Community College to provide vo-tech training in the following subjects:

- Cooking I and II
- Carpentry I and II
- Human Development
- Introduction to Personal Computing
- Body and Fender Repair
- Developmental Reading
- Interpersonal Relations
- Basic Engine Technology
- Developmental English
- Cabinet Making

Sheriff Foti hosts award ceremonies periodically to recognize the achieve-

ment of the trainees. Family and friends of the About Face trainees are invited to attend the ceremony, along with criminal justice, school board, and city officials. At the most recent ceremony, each of the trainees received an award appropriate for his accomplishments, and several former trainees who had been released, returned to receive their awards. More than 100 awards were given out, including:

- Twenty-one adult literacy certificates
- Twenty-five G.E.D. certificates
- Eleven General Equivalency Diplomas
- Fifty-four Delgado College credit certificates

Community Service Projects

Working on projects to improve neighborhoods throughout the city teaches trainees that they are part of the community and reinforces the idea that they owe a debt to the community. Projects include cleaning lagoons in City Park, assisting in the food drive, painting elementary schools, cleaning up playgrounds and repainting graffiti-covered bridges.

In conjunction with the city's health department, About Face trainees also help alleviate health, safety and environmental problems throughout the city. Trainees routinely board up fire-damaged structures, tear down crack houses, and remove trash and debris from vacant lots.

The most notable project was a partnership between the Sheriff's Office and the National Home Builders Association. Trainees first demolished three abandoned buildings and, under the direction of the National Home Builders Institute, constructed Sesame House, a 2,800 square foot adult day care facility. During this ten-week program, trainees received detailed instructions in constructing a house from the ground up. This included everything from reading a blueprint to the basics of carpentry, painting, wiring, and plumbing.

In 1990, J. William Bennett, the Director of the National Drug Control Policy, toured Sesame House on his visit to New Orleans and met with the About Face trainees who worked on this project.

Follow-Through

Trainees graduate through a three-platoon system. The first platoon is considered the elite and given the most benefits. The third platoon consists of new pickups and those trainees with attitude and discipline problems. A trainee can be demoted from the first platoon to the third and be required to start over.

Particular emphasis is placed on preparation for reentry into the free world. About Face trainees are required to make family and employment contacts that will provide them with stability upon their release. Louisiana law allows judges to recommend some offenders for About Face and permits the state

parole board to consider About Face graduates for immediate parole. No one who has gone through the program has been turned down on his request for parole.

Program Success

Initial study indicates a recidivism rate of less than 9 percent. The Sheriff's Office is still in the process of developing a precise method of follow-up to determine the full effect of this program. It is not uncommon for former trainees to return to visit their drill instructors and "touch base."

The success of the About Face program has generated interest both nationally and internationally. Judges, juvenile authorities, sheriffs, wardens and law enforcement officers from all across the country have toured the About Face facility. Foreign visitors have come from as far away as Germany, France, Great Britain, Zimbabwe, and South America.

For further information, contact Charles C. Foti, Orleans Parish Criminal Sheriff, 2800 Gravier Street, New Orleans, Louisiana, 70119; (504) 827-8501.

This article was reprinted from a program brochure prepared by the Orleans Parish Criminal Sheriff's Office. ■

Alameda County Jail Offers Parenting Education

*by Charles C. Plummer,
Sheriff/Marshal-Coroner-
Public Administrator / Director
of Emergency Services,
Alameda County, California*

Alameda County's program, Teaching and Loving Kinds (T.A.L.K.), consists of parenting classes and contact visits between incarcerated mothers and their children

The parenting class curriculum addresses the incarcerated parent and the special problems of their children. It is designed to rid the child of the guilt often seen in children of incarcerated parents and to strengthen, or sometimes to begin, the bond between mother and child.

The visitation portion of the program brings to life what is taught in the parenting classes. It provides time for the children to have quality time with their mothers-to play, read, or just sit and talk together. During

birth to twelve years of age. Four thousand dollars purchased all equipment, supplies, toys, and games, which are designed for joint participation.

These visitation periods are often the first time a child has been alone with his or her mother. They provide an opportunity for the child to learn that he/she is loved and that it is not his/her fault that the mother is in jail.

Another important benefit to the program is that it improves the relationship between children and law enforcement. A uniformed deputy sheriff is with the children during the visitation time, which makes the child see the police in a positive light.

Problems Addressed by the Program

In 1989, the Alameda County Sheriff's Department moved more **than 2,500** inmates from an old, dilapidated jail into a modern, state-of-the-art facility. The old jail, a World War II army barracks, was not conducive

There seems to be a hereditary chain of incarceration among many families. This cycle must stop. A first step is to provide stability in the lives of the children, who are often left with a grandmother, an aunt, or whoever will take care of them while their mother is in jail. The T.A.L.K. program's main objective is to keep them from following in their mother's footsteps.

NIC Funding Supports Program Development

The Los Angeles County Jail system began a program similar to T.A.L.K. about three years ago. Alameda County applied for and received a technical assistance grant through the National Institute of Corrections (NIC), which enabled us to visit and observe the Los Angeles program. We spoke with those who had developed the program as well as with the security staff about benefits of the program and its problems. We gathered valuable information to provide the groundwork for Alameda County's program.

The grant also made it possible for Los Angeles County to send two program administrators from their Sybil Brand Institution for Women to our facility. This visit helped us make significant progress in developing our program and identifying portions of the Los Angeles program appropriate to our facility and

The first step in breaking a possible hereditary chain of incarceration is to provide stability in the lives of the children of incarcerated women.

these times the jail gymnasium is transformed into a nursery room/playground setting for children from

one of the new, productive programs for the new facility.

T.A.L.K. The Sybil Brand program had also been in operation long enough to have statistics that proved the benefit of the program to both parents and children.

County Role

Alameda County received support for the program from the Probation Department, judges, and local groups concerned with the needs of female offenders.

A deputy sheriff assigned to develop the program worked closely with those in the Los Angeles program. Las Positas College agreed to fund the two program instructors who were to conduct the parenting class and visitation. Once the instructors were on board, they worked with the deputy in selecting equipment, supplies, games, and toys for the mother/child visits.

The Inmate Services Manager oversees the program. The deputy now works eight hours on the day of the visit and five hours another day during the week processing inmate applications, ordering supplies, and keeping an inventory.

Results

The results of the T.A.L.K. program are all positive.

- The women inmates in the program have improved their behavior in the jail to avoid disciplinary problems that would keep them from attending the classes and visiting with their children.

- The children's caregivers have reported that the children are less nervous at home after visiting their mothers and their behavior has improved.
- Inmates have shown a real interest in their children, some for the first time. Some have initiated a self-help group on being released and have asked the instructors for assistance.
- There have been positive changes in the attitudes of some of the children toward the deputies.
- The National Association of Counties awarded our program its 1991 Achievement Award.

The T.A.L.K. program has been wonderful for the Alameda County Jail's relations with the public. The media have consistently provided positive coverage of this unique program.

The most important results, of course, can come **only when we finally see that the children have grown up and avoided the correctional system altogether.**

For further information, contact Charles Barry, Inmate Services Manager, or Deputy Lin Otey, Alameda County Sheriff's Department, 5325 Broder Boulevard, Dublin, California, 94568.

The T.A.L.K. program has been wonderful for the Alameda County Jail's relations with the public.

Recommended Reading

Intervening with Substance-Abusing Offenders: A Framework for Action. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991.

Prepared by the National Task Force on Correctional Substance Abuse Strategies under the sponsorship of the National Institute of Corrections and the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance.

Effective, documented strategies for controlling contraband in institutions, monitoring substance abuse behavior, and therapeutic or educational intervention do exist. This document discusses six major goals for substance abuse programming. They include: assessment, programming, linkages, human resources, environment, and accountability. Strategy briefs are provided for various programs that have been implemented to deal with substance abuse among criminal offenders. These programs include: Cornerstone; Corazon; Dual Disability Offender Management program; Passages Program; and Beloit Substance Abuse Day Program.

Intervening with Substance-Abusing Offenders: A Framework for Action: Executive Summary.

A brief discussion is provided of the six major goals suggested by the National Task Force on Correctional Substance Abuse Strategies for substance abuse programming.

Jail Classification System Development. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections, 1990.

Materials in this series, first highlighted in the June 1990 issue of the LJA *Bulletin*, were prepared under a grant from the NIC Jails Division. Three additional titles are now available to help jail administrators in considering objective classification systems that meet the unique needs of jails.

- **Guidelines for Developing, Implementing, and revising an Objective Classification System.**

Discusses issues in and approaches to objective jail classification and presents a four-

teen-step plan for the implementation process. Appendices include the National Council on Crime and Delinquency's Jail Additive Classification System and the Decision-Tree Classification System developed by Community Justice Alternatives.

- **Final Report.** Describes in detail the development and implementation of objective jail classification systems at three test sites. Presents the classification instruments used and analyses of how they worked and were refined for use at these jails.
- **Implementing Objective Classification in Jails: Some Problem Areas.** This 1991 study augments earlier documents in the series by identifying problem areas that have arisen in recent attempts to implement objective classification in jails. Part 2 provides a framework for evaluating the process and success of implementation.

Single copies of these documents may be requested by contacting the NIC Information Center at (303) 939-8877, or sending your request to 1790 30th Street, Suite 130, Boulder, Colorado, 80301.